

One of the areas that Bamford and her team are taking a lead role in researching is microplastics. Plastic products never completely breakdown, but instead divide into tiny, multi-colored plastic bits that resemble confetti. These microplastics can make up a sizable portion of marine debris and are ingested by marine species, from whales to zoo plankton.

With very few people in the world working on the issue, Bamford is collaborating with Joel Baker, a University of Washington professor, to examine the problem and develop practical solutions.

"Sometimes it is hard to demonstrate the impacts of this form of marine pollution to the public, the fishing community and coastal managers because it is typically submerged and not seen," Bamford said. "However, once we present our research on the degradation caused by litter and debris on our seafloors, on our beaches, and in our waterways, people will be more inclined to reduce, reuse and recycle a non-degradable item, which in turn reduces marine debris."

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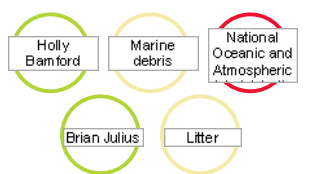
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